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Cromwell LIFE

February 2017 • TurleyCT.com

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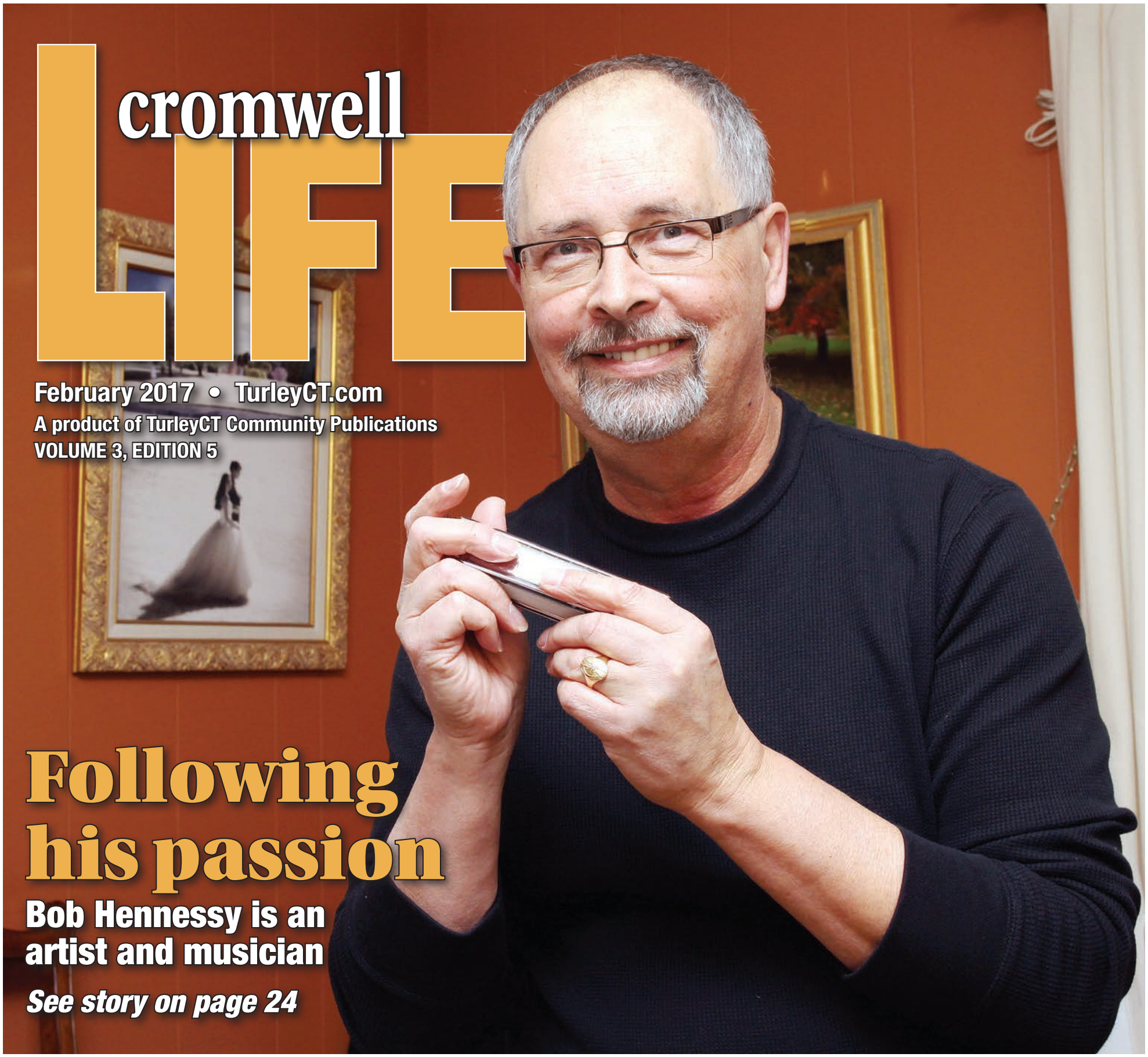
VOLUME 3, EDITION 5



Following his passion

Bob Hennessy is an artist and musician

See story on page 24

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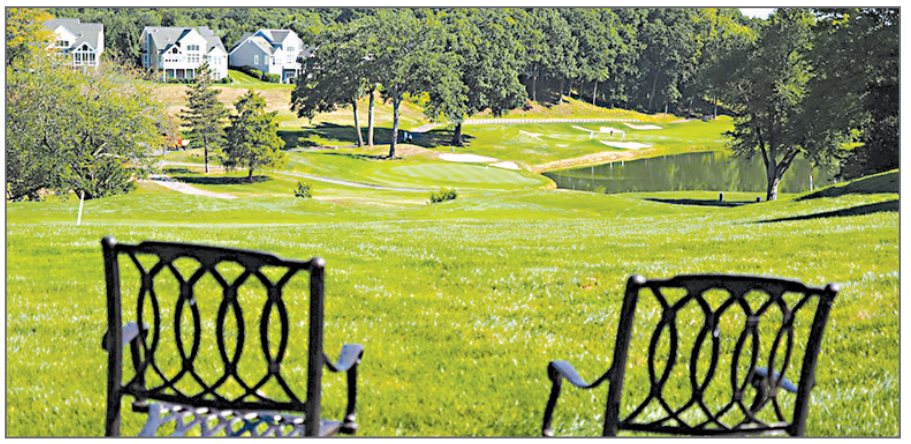

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QUOTE OF NOTE:

"We want them to inquire, investigate and collaborate, and the teacher is really more of a facilitator." - *Holly Holander*

See story page 12

ON THE COVER

Bob Hennessy is a multi-faceted artitst. In additon to his fine arts and commercial photography work, he is an accomplished harmonica player. Behind him is a photograph of New Pond on Nooks Hill Road.

Photo by Lisa Brisson
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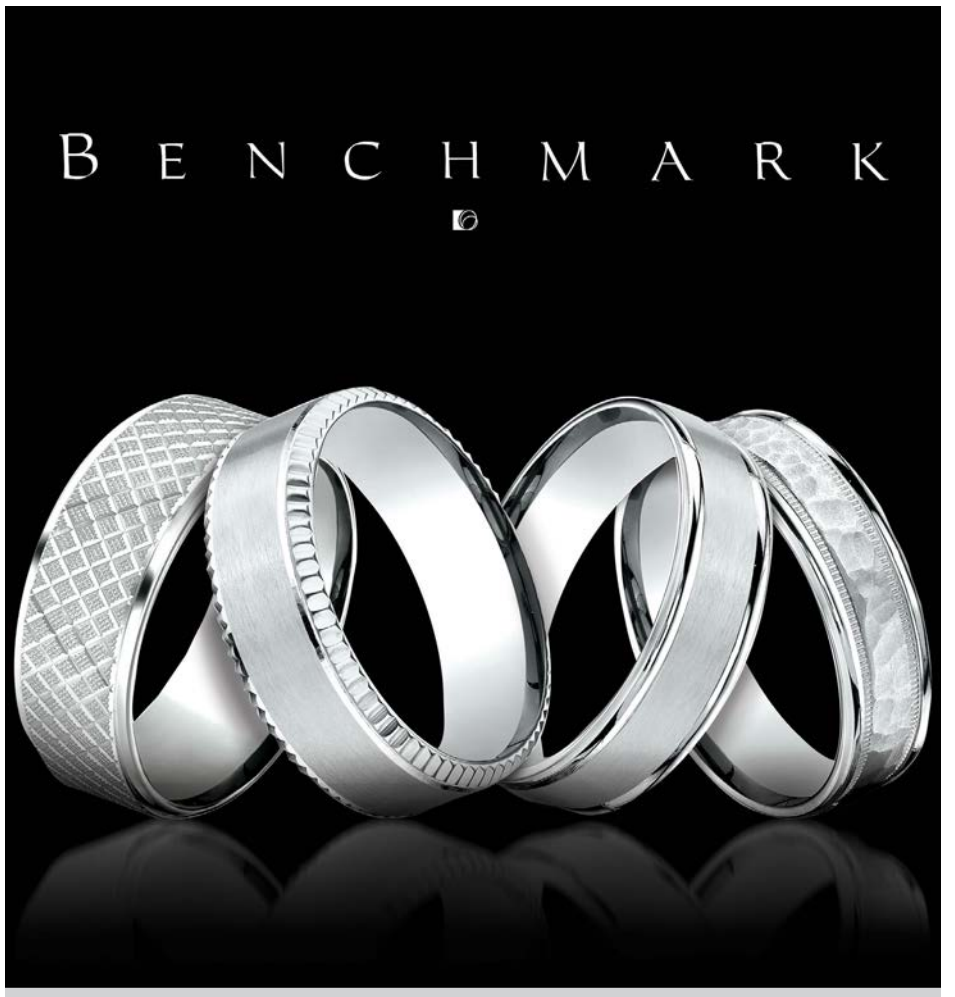

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Cromwell High is back

Girls soccer team completes a successful season

by Allie Rivera
Staff Writer

It feels gratifying to defy the odds. That's what members of the girls soccer team at Cromwell High School said following their most successful season to date, despite everything that came their way.

"We're kind of like the underdogs," 17-year-old senior Julia Liseo said. "Nobody really expected it from us, but we showed up."

"And kicked butt," junior Ashley Donlon, 16, added.

The players have a right to feel confident. They finished their season with 14 wins, a better record than any of them have seen in their time at CHS.

"Before, when people thought of Cromwell, they thought, 'oh, easy win,' but this year we showed them that that's not the case," Julia, a co-captain, said. "Cromwell's back."

Getting to that point, however, was not an easy task. It took dedication from every member, starting in the summer before the season began.

"We were working out and training every day, twice a day," co-captain Steph Sousa, 17, said.

Due to CIAC rules, the team was not allowed to meet with its coaches prior to the school year, but with the help of some parents and a commitment to improve, the girls organized the practices themselves and put in the effort.

"We really took it into our own hands to come into this season ready to go," Julia said.

When the season began in the fall, the coaches said they were impressed with what they found.

"There have been other times where we come in and have to do conditioning to start," Head Coach Marcelo Caetano said. "We don't have to do that anymore. We hit the ground running."

Typically, Caetano and Assistant Coach Phil Russo conduct fitness tests at the beginning of the season to gauge how each of the athletes is doing. This year that proved unnecessary.

"Every one of us passed that first fitness test," junior Jenna Serrantino said.

"We ended up just cancelling the rest of it because we didn't need it," Caetano added.

In addition to being physically prepared for the season, Caetano and Russo, who said they consider themselves co-coaches, both agreed that their players were mentally prepared as well.

"Every single one of them really bought in to the program," Caetano said. "They want to be around soccer and they want to get better."

"Everyone was on the same page and we all had a drive to win," Jenna said. "Everyone brought their A-game every day."

Players and coaches agreed that the support they received from parents and school administrators also contributed to their success.

"These are fantastic kids and they have fantastic families," Caetano said. "We also have [Athletic Director] Kelly Maher and [Principal] Fran DiFiore, who have always supported us.

"When you have that kind of support and the team buys in, you can handle anything," he added.

That support and team mentality became necessary part way into the season when Julia's father, Joseph Liseo, died in October of colon cancer. An active member of the soccer community and coach for the summer league, his death deeply affected the entire team.

But instead of letting tragedy pull them apart, the girls said they grew closer together.

"Everyone was on the same page and we all had a drive to win. Everyone brought their A-game every day."

– Jenna Serrantino

"In the days after his passing, the whole team was at my house every day," Julia said. "It made us all want to work harder for him. He really touched everyone on this team, so this season was really for him."

"Everybody knew him and everybody loved him," Steph added.

With greater resolve, the teammates dedicated themselves to finishing off the season to the best of their abilities.

"We were doing it for each other and for Mr. Liseo and not just working hard for ourselves," sophomore Cara Jordan said.

From that point forward, the team became more like a family, spending time together both on and off the field.

"I've met some of my best friends doing soccer here," 16-year-old Allie Fabian said. "It really feels like we're all a family."

In the six years that Caetano and Russo have been coaching at Cromwell High, they said they have never seen a team quite like this one.

"Not to take away from any of the teams before, but this group is special," Caetano said. "I know what they're capable of and they finally all started believing it."

The girls said their success would not have been possible without the dedication of their coaches.

"When you connect on a different level with a coach and they bring that positive energy, it makes you want to stick with it and push to be

Courtesy photos

The Cromwell High School girls soccer team had its best season in recent years and many members credit coaches Marcelo Caetano, right, and Phil Russo, left. They received the Shoreline Coach of the Year Award and Shoreline Assistant Coach of the Year Award, respectively.

better," Ashley said. "It's amazing how deeply they care for the team. They're really there for us."

Both Caetano and Russo were recognized this year with the Shoreline Coach of the Year Award and Shoreline Assistant Coach of the Year Award, respectively.

"It's about time," Julia said with a laugh. "Those are well deserved."

The coaches remain humble about the recognition, saying that, though an honor, they would rather see their players win championships.

"It's not because we did anything different than years prior.

Practices and games for the girls soccer team at Cromwell High School typically involve a great deal of laughter and playful teasing.

It's really a credit to the kids," Caetano said. "There are 39 girls on this team, including two that were hurt, but we don't succeed without every single one of them."

In addition to the coaches being recognized, seven players were honored by the Shoreline Conference.

Last year the team had none.

Cara, a 15-year-old sophomore, was recognized as the Shoreline Conference scholar-athlete of the year, not only for her high grades, but her abilities on the field.

"There has not been one kid more talented to come through in our six years," Caetano said. "She's at a different level and other coaches know it."

An all-state and all-conference soccer player, she has been playing the sport since she was 4.

"I like using my feet since I'm not very coordinated with my hands," she said with a laugh.

In addition to playing with the CHS team, she serves as the vice president of the Student Council of her class, as well as running on the track team and playing for Oakwood Soccer Club.

"It's given me a chance to travel and see new places," she said. "My team went to Spain last year and we got to play against Spain and Switzerland."

While Cara was honored for her hard work and dedication to school and soccer, her teammates and coaches said it is who she is as a person that makes her stand out from a crowd.

"She's the sweetest person in the whole world," Steph said.

"She's just a fantastic kid," Caetano said. "I'm more proud of her for the person she is. No one works harder than her."

With the season behind them, the team's freshmen, sophomores and juniors are already looking forward to next year and hope to improve.

"It was a successful season, but we still want more," Caetano said.

"I'm already ready for next year. I want to play again," Jenna, a future captain, said. "Now we all know what we can do." **CL**

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The first step

Officials reach consensus on need to build a new school to replace Edna C. Stevens

by Mark Jahne
Editor

The Town Council, Board of Education and Board of Finance are considering a proposal to raze Edna C. Stevens School and build a completely new facility on the same parcel of land.

Photos by Mark Jahne

There is a long way to go before Edna C. Stevens School is torn down and replaced with a modern facility. But the process has begun with what appears to be consensus among the members of three governing bodies in town.

A joint meeting of the Town Council, Board of Education and Board of Finance was held in October to get a sense of where each group stood. Additional meetings are likely to be scheduled.

It was an opportunity for them to hear some early financial projections about the cost of building a new school and how that would be funded.

Enrollment is not the driving factor. School officials contend that Edna C. Stevens is simply inadequate to meet today's educational needs. Superintendent of Schools Dr. Paula Talty explained the need.

"Our enrollment has remained steady, even though we have some levels that are very, very large," she said.

She was questioned by a finance board member who wanted to know why Talty and the school board are advocating for a completely new school rather than "renovating as new" the existing structure.

A renovation project would mean students would be in the building while the work is ongoing, Talty said. There would be dust, noise, workmen and other disruptions, as well as safety considerations. All those factors would extend the length of the project.

"Instructional time would be significantly impacted," she said.

School board Chairman Michael Camilleri added that, as one example, the hallways just aren't wide enough and this is a problem that cannot be easily corrected by a renovation project.

Most of the discussion revolved around when to begin the project, assuming that the public supports it. Finance Director Marianne Sylvester prepared a long-range plan with plenty of fiscal data for financial projections.

She told the assembled officials that the town is scheduled to experience a significant decrease in its debt service in the early years of the next decade and that might be a good time to plan on starting to pay off a school construction project.

"We have debt coming off in 2023," she said.

A school project would require issuing bonds and a certain percentage of the total cost would be reimbursed by the state. But no one knows what that number will be in the future as the state government deals with a budget deficit of more than $1 billion.

Rocky Hill is expecting to receive 36 percent state reimbursement for a new school that was approved by voters in a Nov. 8 referendum. This will save taxpayers in that town $17 million on a project expected to cost $48 million.

Cromwell is hoping to receive a similar amount. Estimates formulated by Sylvester and her staff indicate that the cost would be $42 million to build a completely new school on the current ECS site. After state reimbursement, the town's share of the cost would be in the neighborhood of $25 million.

Mayor Enzo Faienza said his thinking is that the town could apply for state funding by June 2018. According to the West Hartford consulting firm Construction Solutions Group, which was hired to help steer the town through the process, it takes a year for such applications to be approved.

Once that approval is received, the town has two years to hire a construction manager and start the work. But it doesn't have to wait and could begin earlier if all of the design work and other pre-construction requirements are completed by then.

The next step would be to have shovels in the ground no later than 2020 and the new building completed and ready to welcome students in the fall of 2022.

School officials would prefer not to wait that long, but were told that there are other capital projects in line ahead of the school, including public library renovations and construction of a new public works garage.

"We all understand that ECS is an old school, but I personally felt there wasn't a need to rush this," Faienza said.

He added that while the Town Council and Board of Finance are in agreement that public education is important, they must also consider the taxpayers as they respond to all of the needs in the community. The town recently invested $200,000 in new windows at the school.

Talty can live with that. Cromwell LIFE spoke with her to get more insight into the need and the superintendent provided additional details.

"Three years ago, I met with the long-range capital plan committee at the town level," she said.

That group includes representation from all three of the aforementioned bodies. They talked about various projects in the pipeline and she added Edna C. Stevens to the list. The need to renovate, but not replace, Cromwell Middle School also became part of the discussion.

Following that, the school board hired a consultant to launch what she called a condition study.

"They did three community workshops during that condition study," Talty said.

The Board of Education reviewed that information and decided three months ago to move forward with plans to replace Edna C. Stevens and renovate CMS.

Talty emphasized that the primary reasons for doing this are the

needs of the educational programs at each school, as well as the physical plants. She added that the classroom sizes at the middle school are inadequate to meet today's instructional needs.

The challenge is greater at Edna C. Stevens.

"Some segments of the facility have come to the end of their life spans," Talty said. "Some of the wings are 60 years old, some of the wings are 30 years old. The kindergarten rooms were added more recently."

Enrollment is 514 students in grades pre-kindergarten to 2. The school was originally constructed in 1959 and increased in size at a later date. Another problem is the lack of air conditioning. Classroom temperatures can rise above 80 degrees in the early fall and late spring.

Talty said that is a constant concern of parents. There have been incidents when classrooms were so warm that children were overcome by the heat and needed to be transported to the hospital.

"Some of the classrooms are small. We need a larger gym. We're looking to continue that as an early learning building," she added. "Little children don't sit at desks like they used to. They need to move around," she said.

That would require additional classrooms for the preschool set.

The new school, once approved, would be erected on the same piece of land. Talty said this will be somewhat disruptive, but not as much as renovating the existing building while it is full of students and staff.

She praised the janitorial and town facilities staff for doing all they can to keep the school operating as smoothly as possible. But they can only do so much with an aging building.

"It's well maintained. They do what they can. They work really hard," Talty said.

A walk through ECS with Principal Lucille DiTunno revealed a building full of learning and instruction. But one also gets a sense of the age of some of the wings and the need for more space.

Kindergartners sit on the floor while gathered around teacher Heather Soucy at Edna C. Stevens School.

"I think we do a really good job of keeping it up," she said.

The preschool option expanded this year and now has five classrooms full of children receiving a full day of instruction and activities. She could use more space for that program. Storage throughout the building is in short supply.

The kitchen is small when one considers that more than 250 hot lunches are served daily. Students must attend lunch in waves because it is not logistically possible to cook for all of them at the same time. The freezer and refrigerator are old and merit replacement.

The windows open in most classrooms at ECS, but there is no cross ventilation. Several window-mounted air conditioning units were put in place to reduce the warm conditions in spring and fall.

Talty also spoke about the needs

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at Cromwell Middle School. Some of the classrooms are too small to meet today's programmatic needs and the science labs are of a makeshift variety. The media center needs better presentation space.

"The building itself is still in good shape. They really don't have good lab space. They need a more 21st century learning environment," she said.

The school is also pressed for space and the attached district offices are due for an upgrade. It currently has an enrollment of 480 students in grades 6-8. That project would most likely not begin until two or three years after the works starts on ECS.

"I'm thinking we would need to borrow $12 million for that," Sylvester said.

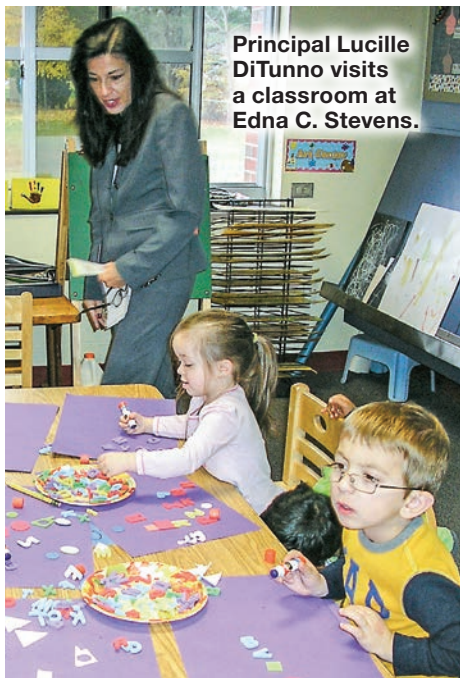
School administrators and the school board would love to start the construction process sooner but Talty understands that the town has other needs that must be addressed, particularly roads and the public works garage.

"I think it's a wise time line. It's doable for us in the schools. It's not an unreasonable deadline," she said. "Everyone wants to do it the right way and I appreciate that."

Town Manager Anthony Salvatore said the town went out to bonding in mid-November for $5.6 million to fund road reconstruction projects and other needs.

"We're looking, within a year or so, for an amount to be determined for a public works sewer facility," he added.

Working together on a math lesson are ECS students Liam LeFebvre, Kaylee Vaughan, Jayden Mandigo and Cole Fitzpatrick.



Principal Lucille DiTunno visits a classroom at Edna C. Stevens.

The gym at ECS is considered too small by administrators to meet the needs of the current enrollment.

Plans are also in the early stages to renovate and expand Cromwell Middle School and the attached school district offices.

The town is also looking to expand the Cromwell Belden Public Library. Salvatore and Sylvester said that if the town puts up $2 million for that project it becomes eligible to receive a state library grant of $1 million more.

"We recognize the importance of updating our facilities while minimizing the impact on the taxpayers," Sylvester said.

The ECS project, if approved, would require a special town meeting to approve funding for the project. **CL**

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Middlesex Community College students listen intently as one of their peers talks about her family and what she thinks her life will be like when she's 75 years old.

Photos by Mark Jahne

Residents of Covenant Village of Cromwell and their guests take in all the students have to say. This was the latest installment of an ongoing collaboration between the college and the retirement community.

Blending the generations

College students visit Covenant Village of Cromwell

by Mark Jahne
Editor

Teenagers and young adults don't often think about what their lives will be like 50 years in the future. People who are in their 70s or older don't often reflect upon the days when they were young adults.

But both groups were able to do just that when a delegation of students from Middlesex Community College visited Covenant Village of Cromwell Dec. 15.

It was the latest installment of a long-running partnership between the two organizations.

The college relationship stemmed from Covenant Village's community partnerships committee, a resident-initiated and managed group that looks for opportunities for the senior citizens to share their years of wisdom and experience with the local community.

This benefits the residents by enabling them to interact with the younger generation, feel a sense of purpose, give back to the community, have fun and basically continue to live life the same way they did before moving into a retirement living.

On this day, more than a dozen college students under the guidance of sociology and psychology professor Rebecca Loew read aloud their reports to a standing-room-only group of senior citizens.

In addition to reflecting upon what life would be like when they are 75, the students also shared information about themselves, their childhood and their families.

Dick and Eunice Wiseman, Ann Grasso and Jack Reisch were instrumental in forming the partnerships committee. They see many benefits from interacting with younger people.

"My husband said when we moved here that the thing he missed was the youth," Eunice said.

She is a retired special education teacher. It made her feel good that the college students were so relaxed with the Covenant Village group.

"They know we're not judgmental and that let's them open up," she said.

This particular group of students is enrolled in the Sociology of the Family class. Loew is pleased with the collaboration. Some of the college students perform internships at the facility to further their learning.

"Two of my colleagues have been partnering with Covenant Village of Cromwell for many years," she said. "This is our seventh or eighth time."

She added that the senior citizens sometimes visit the college to participate in panel discussions.

"One of our units is on older people and their families," Loew said.

"There's just a thirst for it and a respect for it. The students feel free to express what must be, for some of them, a difficult life journey," Cindy Harrigan, director of community life at Covenant Village, said.

Everyone learns from each other at these gatherings, she added. Middlesex Community College is not the only such collaboration.

"We work with the Cromwell school system. We have a lot of programs with the schools," Harrigan said.

Later that same day a group of students from Cromwell High School paid a visit to assist the seniors with the ins and outs of smartphones, pads and other computer technology.

All of this makes the older people feel that their lives still have value and that they have something to contribute to the outside world.

"So many of our residents appreciate that they're being tapped into" for their life's experience, Harrigan said. "This is an opportunity to do just that." CL

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Making a stand

Local women travel to Native American reservation to oppose pipeline

by Allie Rivera
Staff Writer

When some people see what they consider injustice, they write a letter, call a member of Congress or post on social media. When Debra Cohen and Diane Hasz see it, they spring into action.

After learning about the events happening at the Standing Rock Reservation in North Dakota, the two friends loaded up in Hasz's 2016 Subaru and drove there.

"We wanted to help in whatever way we can, but mostly we wanted simply to bear witness," Cohen said.

The controversy at the Native American reservation was just starting to gain wider attention when the two took their journey in mid-November. The Standing Rock Sioux tribe began holding demonstrations against the installation of the Dakota Access pipeline, a $3.7 billion project that involves a 30-inch diameter and 1,172-mile long pipeline from North Dakota to Illinois carrying roughly 470,000 barrels of crude oil per day.

The project has been opposed by the Standing Rock tribe, with support from other Native Americans across the country, as they say it both threatens sacred native lands and has the potential to contaminate the community's water supply from the Missouri River.

"They've so often been called protestors, but they're not. They're

While driving to the camp, friends Debra Cohen and Diane Hasz passed a sign signifying the start of the Standing Rock Reservation's tribal lands.

The camp at Standing Rock became the temporary home for thousands of people demonstrating against the Dakota Access pipeline.

Photos provided by Debra Cohen

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water protectors," Cohen, a Wethersfield resident, said. "There is a pipeline directly threatening ancestral and treaty land. It will be directly under the Missouri River and we know what happens when pipelines burst.

"They are out there trying to protect the environment because we are all downstream from something," she added.

For months, demonstrators set up a camp at Standing Rock. In response, the Morton County sheriff's office as well as Cass County law enforcement began forming a highly militarized police force.

By early November, confrontations between the two groups had grown violent with police allegedly using water cannons, rubber bullets and tear gas, among other tactics, on the unarmed demonstrators.

"They're flying planes overhead all night long to keep people awake," Cohen said. "They're doing everything they can to disrupt this."

Cohen and Hasz, a resident of Cromwell, did not see any of the violence first hand. Instead, they visited the nearby reservation, where thousands of people had set up camp to contribute to the cause.

Before leaving on their three-day drive to North Dakota the two friends, who had never traveled together before, began collecting donations to give to the demonstrators at the camp.

"People also donated money and so we purchased a lot of things for the trip, too," Hasz said.

Hasz's Subaru, affectionately named Carmen, was loaded with shovels, tarps, latex-free gloves, feminine hygiene products, sleeping bags, non-perishable food and 100 pounds of rice.

They spent most of the five days in North Dakota at the reservation camp, but Cohen and Hasz slept at a nearby hotel for the duration of their stay.

"We knew that, while an interesting option, staying at the camp was unrealistic for

Diane Hasz, left, of Cromwell and Debra Cohen, right, of Wethersfield, loaded Hasz's 2016 Subaru with supplies and drove to the Standing Rock Reservation in North Dakota in mid-November. They wanted to help those opposing an oil pipeline through Native American land.

us," Hasz said.

"We also realized that if we stayed at the hotel, we could offer showers and a warm place to rest for those at the camp," Cohen added. "It turned out that providing showers was our biggest donation. In five days, we provided 18 showers."

When at the camp, both women said that the general feeling was one of purpose. Every person there had come for the same reason and many were prepared to stay for as long as necessary.

"It was solemn and purposeful," Hasz said. "They were really hunkering down and preparing for winter."

They also spoke about the idea of spirit guiding them and others throughout their time there.

"I can't tell you how many people I spoke to who spoke about spirit – spirit taking them there, spirit guiding them," Cohen said. "People from all religious paths were finding this common path of spirit."

There was no cellular service, so communication was minimal. They had planned before leaving Connecticut the specific ways in which they hoped to help in the camp, such as in the kitchen, but they found that once there those plans were superfluous.

"There's this wonderful thing of just letting go of control," Cohen said. "Our planning meant nothing. Our timing meant nothing."

Despite this, the two women said that they never felt aimless or that their efforts couldn't be utilized.

"It seemed that, truly, we constantly found ourselves in the right place at the right time to fill a need or make a connection," Cohen said. "It's that sort of thing that makes me believe spirit is there in some sort of way, whatever you believe."

Cohen and Hasz stressed that they were only a small part of a much larger effort. They recognized that they were coming onto someone else's land and into someone else's fight, so they wanted to remain as sensitive as possible.

"Our role is not to arrive and take charge and save the day for the native people out there," Cohen said. "Our role is to be an ally."

"You have to realize where you are," Hasz added. "There are cultural considerations that we don't normally think about."

After returning to Connecticut, they started brainstorming ways to get more supplies out to the people at Standing Rock. While they don't believe they can be helpful during the cold winter months, they want to continue to support the efforts of the demonstrators.

In early December, major changes at Standing Rock occurred. On Dec. 3, roughly 2,000 U.S. military veterans began arriving at the camp as part of the Veterans Stand for Standing Rock group to support and relieve regular demonstrators.

The following day, Dec. 4, the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers denied an easement for the pipeline to cross through the reservation, effectively stopping the project. Cohen went back to the reservation in mid-December. **CL**

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EDUCATION

Photo by Allie Rivera

The full-day preschool program provides free early childhood education to the children thanks to a Smart Start grant. The students in Teri Heavey's class enjoyed sharing lunch together.

LIFE *in the classroom*

Nurturing curiosity and fostering independence

by Allie Rivera
Staff Writer

At the end of a hallway in Edna C. Stevens School sits a colorful classroom filled with 4-year-olds happily munching on their lunches. It was pizza day, and as some sat with sauce ringing their mouths, teacher Teri Heavey stood back with a smile on her face.

"We have fun in here," she said.

The students are part of the school district's free preschool program, made possible

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through the state's Smart Start initiative. Within the class, one of four in the building, roughly half of the students are identified as having specials needs.

The program is new to the district, created over the past three years, but since its inception it has grown both in size and popularity.

"We're really proud of how the program has grown in two years," Director of Teaching and Learning Holly Hollander said.

The new preschool setup came about roughly three years ago when district administrators began working with outside consultants on how best to serve this population.

"It was brought to our attention that our program was out of compliance with the ratio of special needs students to typical peers," Superintendent of Schools Dr. Paula Talty said.

Recognizing this, the district applied for the Smart Start grant, a program of the Office of Early Childhood which is intended to expand preschool programming across the state.

With that grant funding secured, the district started with one preschool classroom. There are now more than 60 students in the program, although Talty and Hollander said that those numbers fluctuate.

By law, public school districts are required to provide education services for students with special needs and the Cromwell Public Schools are equipped to evaluate children at any age.

The district created a lottery system for the additional spaces within the classroom that is held each spring for interested parents of 4-year-olds in town. While the program is still new, it is already competitive.

"Last year there were over 56 applicants for about 24 slots," Talty said.

In offering spaces to a wider variety of residents, Talty and Hollander said they hope to give opportunities for those who may not otherwise be able to afford a private preschool program.

"We want them to inquire, investigate and collaborate, and the teacher is really more a facilitator."

– Holly Hollander

According to information Talty received from the United Way, one in five families in Cromwell lives at or below the poverty line. That number makes up for 23 percent of the enrollment at ECS.

"We have a population that would really benefit from access to these programs," Hollander said. "We want to make sure that our students all have access to early childhood education."

Talty said that, in her experience, many residents are unaware of the economic gap in town and that can lead to a dearth in resources.

"Suburban poverty presents different problems than urban poverty," Talty said. "You have issues of transportation, along with the fact that many resources are given more to urban areas. The Cromwell clergy has been very instrumental in working to help this."

With the preschool program underway, administrators and teachers are now also in the process of gaining the accreditation from the National Association for the Education of Young Children.

"The NAEYC really is a process to ensure quality," Hollander said. "It's not just for schools, it could be done at child care centers and private preschools."

"For us, the NAEYC accreditation just confirms what we already know, that we have a high-quality program," Talty added.

One of the staff members leading the charge in this endeavor is Kim Nagy-Maruschock, state Birth to 3 program liaison for the district and one of the first teachers in the

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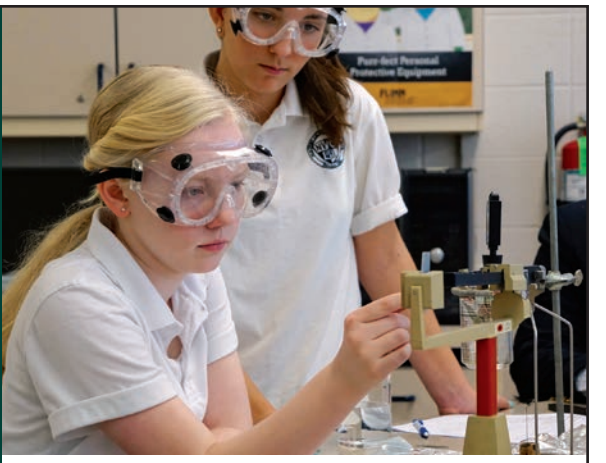

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EDUCATION

Lucy Cranston King and Mazieli Heglisiuth, students in Teri Heavey's preschool class at Edna Stevens School, laughed throughout lunch.

local preschool program. Nagy-Maruschock has been instrumental in creating a program centered on play-based learning.

"Kim has such a history with that," Hollander said. "This program is grounded in play. We want them to inquire, investigate and collaborate, and the teacher is really more a facilitator."

In her classroom, Heavey agreed that letting students grow to be independent is an important aspect of her teaching.

"Our goal is to get them to feel independent and confident," she said. "Everybody has their struggles, but they're also learning how to ask for help when they need it."

In addition to providing a quality program, the administrators also said it was necessary to hire quality teachers, such as Heavey. All of the teachers are dual certified in both early childhood and special education.

"When we started, Kim and her colleague Sarah [Blundo] were both dual certified," Talty said. "We made a decision as a district that we wanted to continue that high quality, so when we began to look for additional staff, that is what we looked for."

The team of preschool teachers works to provide the best learning environment it can for the students.

"It's a great team. I'm very proud of that team," Talty said.

In addition to those teachers, the program also involves the kindergarten teachers at ECS by allowing them to collaborate and find the best way for students to transition.

"I've worked in previous districts where pre-K was in its own separate building and it didn't have that collaborative piece with the kindergarten teachers," Nagy-Maruschock said. "For the teachers to know the students and their intricacies before they start is really beneficial."

"Being the building principal, I've found it helps the children to become acclimated to the building and get to know the staff," Lucille DiTunno said.

This collaboration also allows teachers to prepare students to meet the academic standards they will face for kindergarten.

"They've done a really nice job of developing into the Common Core standard," Hollander said. "It really allows the educators to look at each child in the classroom individually."

By providing more preschool education in town, Talty hopes more residents will seek to keep their child's education in the district.

"When CREC opened a magnet school in Rocky Hill, that garnered a lot of interest, but really we would prefer that Cromwell students be educated here in Cromwell, when possible," she said.

Talty and Hollander said they consider the preschool program to be a success and know it would not have been possible without the Smart Start grant.

"We are so appreciative to the state Department of Early Childhood Education," Hollander said. "This is funding that could have easily been pushed to the side. It's because of them that we are able to do it."

Hollander said that, specifically, Gov. Dannel Malloy and Commissioner of Education Dianna Wentzell have been instrumental in securing funding for preschool programs across the state.

"There is a commitment there," Hollander said. "Because of this, we're nurturing curiosity and fostering independence." **CL**

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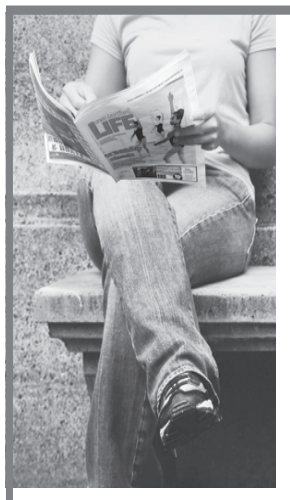

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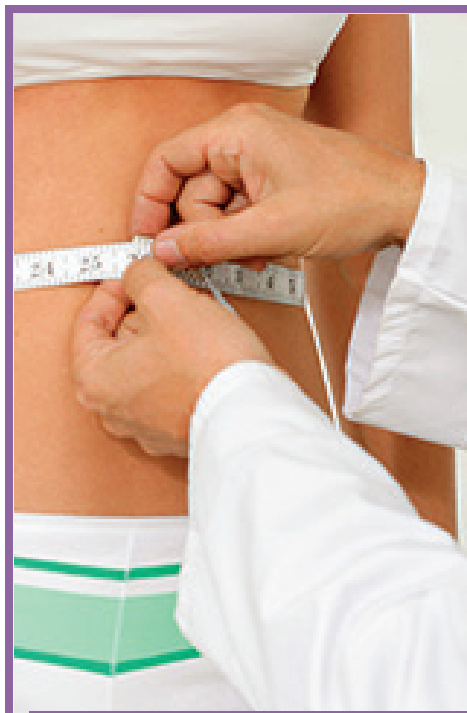
Medical myths

Health professionals set the record straight

by Lynn Woike
LIFE Staff

Health myths, misinformation, half-truths and old wives' tales continue to dictate our choices and behaviors. Casual research around the Internet can leave you confused, so we turned to local experts to set the record straight.

Static stretching has little benefit before a workout and may even reduce performance.



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Healthy Living

MYTH: Stretching before exercise reduces the risk of injury.

TRUTH: Boguslawa Badon, licensed physical therapist and owner of Farmington Valley Physical Therapy, said many of her clients feel that pre-exercise stretching will reduce the risk of injury through improvements in range of motion, decreased muscle stiffness and increased blood flow. However, none of that is true.

"Traditional stretching, where you hold a pose with your body in such a way so that you feel a pull on your connective tissue or muscles, is called static stretching. Many people will stretch their hamstrings and quads before a run, or arms and shoulders before swimming or tennis. The truth is, you're probably not doing much for your workout and might even be reducing your strength, power and performance," she said.

Studies have concluded that stretching does not affect the incidence of overuse injuries, nor does it reduce the muscle soreness that can come a day or two after having done too much. In addition, Badon said, static stretching could actually reduce strength and power between 5 percent and 30 percent.

To prepare for exercise, she recommends a gradual aerobic warmup that includes dynamic stretching for sports that require more range of motion.

"Static stretching is better as part of cool down and recovery when reducing muscle tension and elasticity makes more sense and you won't be immediately relying on your muscles to generate power," she said.

Static stretching as well as exercise systems that emphasize eccentric muscle strengthening like Pilates, Somatic Movement, Gyrotonic or Yoga, all are beneficial as part of a well-rounded fitness regimen to help maintain a strong, flexible, coordinated body.

MYTH: Weight loss is just calories in vs. calories out.

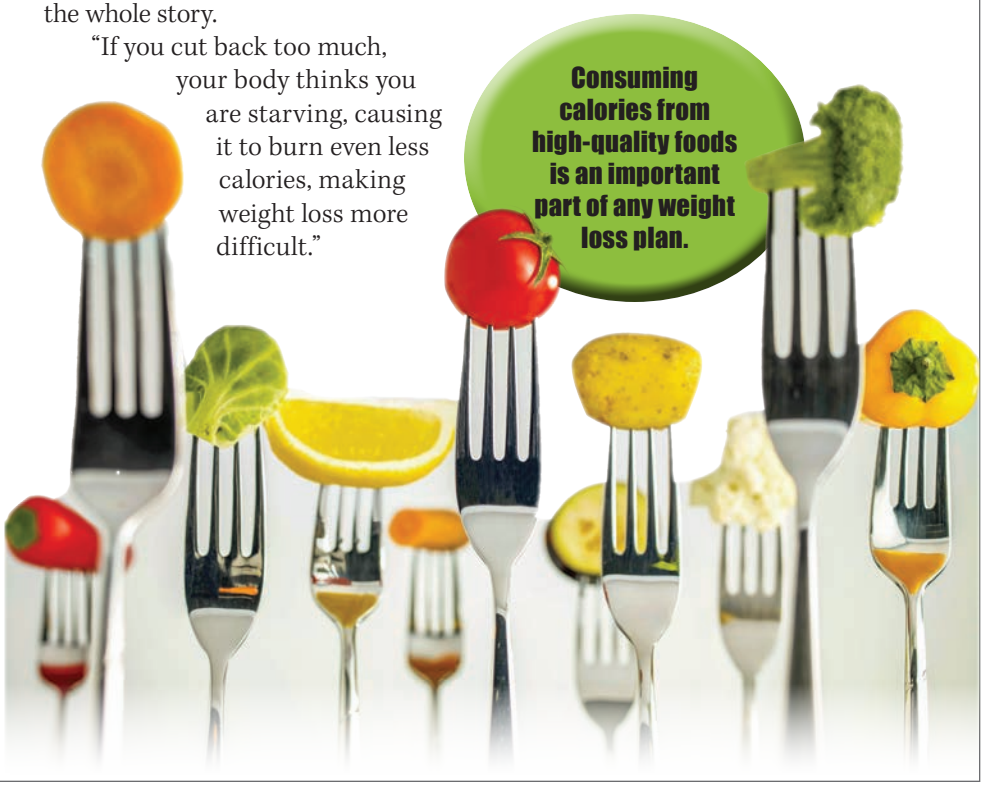
TRUTH: While weight loss advice is often pared down to sayings such as "You have to burn more calories than you eat to lose weight," Renee Bordeaux, owner of Bordeaux Nutrition in Newington, said, "Most people who are overweight actually don't consume enough calories."

Most people, she explained, will lose some weight by cutting back moderately on calories, but that's not the whole story.

"If you cut back too much, your body thinks you are starving, causing it to burn even less calories, making weight loss more difficult."

She recommends eating high-quality foods including lean meats, fresh fruits and vegetables to fuel your metabolism throughout the day.

"That way, the body will feel it is receiving enough calories and will shed excess fat."



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Healthy Living

MYTH: Cracking your knuckles will lead to arthritis.

TRUTH: "According to Western Journal of Medicine, a study was conducted on 28 patients of a senior citizen home who were able to recall knuckle cracking as a child or even now, and those who did not. Each patient was asked to demonstrate how they cracked their knuckle, and their hands were examined clinically with X-rays.

Out of the 14 patients who cracked their knuckles, only one had a clinically diagnosed case of osteoarthritis and out of the 14 who were not knuckle crackers, eight patients had diagnosed cases of osteoarthritis," said Dr. Bradley Visconti of Back to Motion Rehab and Fitness in Newington.

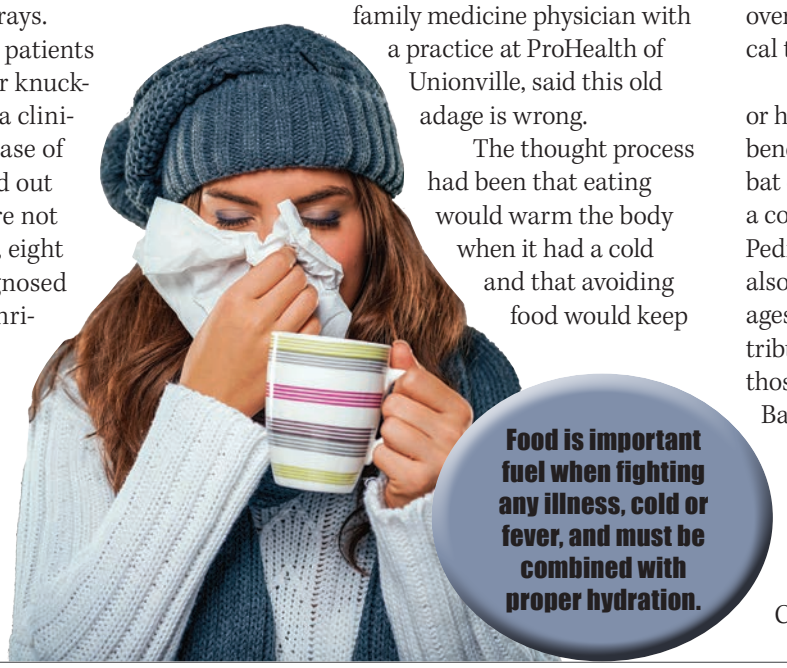
There were no major differences between those who did and didn't crack their knuckles, disproving the theory, he said.

As for the sound made when knuckles are "cracked," Visconti said it is the release of synovial gases and fluid between the joints being manipulated.

MYTH: Feed a cold, starve a fever.

TRUTH: Dr. Lakshmi Babu, a family medicine physician with a practice at ProHealth of Unionville, said this old adage is wrong.

The thought process had been that eating would warm the body when it had a cold and that avoiding food would keep it from getting more heated while experiencing a fever.



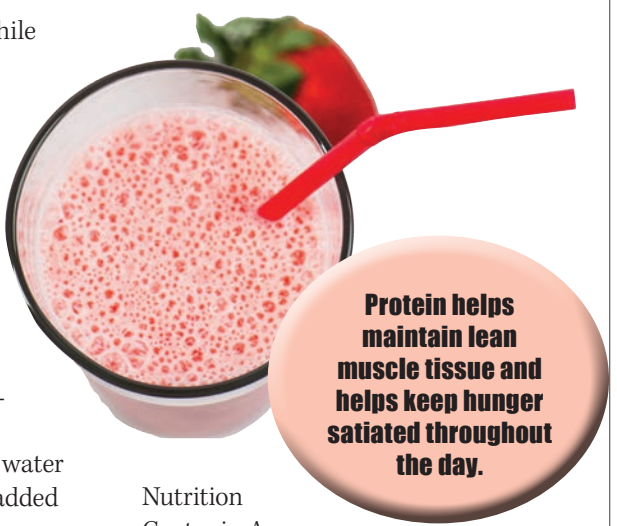
Food is important fuel when fighting any illness, cold or fever, and must be combined with proper hydration.

"Recent medical science has said that we really should feed a cold and feed a fever, because food is fuel and when we're fighting an illness, we need healthy food," she said, adding that while it's important to eat without overeating, it's even more critical to stay hydrated.

The best thing to drink is water or herbal tea. Hot tea has the added benefit of a vapor that can help combat dry nasal passages when you have a cold. Fluids such as Gatorade or Pedialyte that replace electrolytes are also fine. Alcohol or caffeinated beverages are not good because they contribute to dehydration, "so avoiding those would be a good thing," Babu said.

MYTH: Protein shakes will add muscle and make you bulky

TRUTH: Protein is necessary for a healthy, strong physique, said Corey Vincent of American Nutrition Center in Avon.



Protein helps maintain lean muscle tissue and helps keep hunger satiated throughout the day.

"While protein is the building block for muscle tissue, eating protein and drinking shakes will not make you bulky. Protein will help maintain lean muscle tissue, keep you strong for daily activities and help keep you satisfied throughout the day," he said.

Active individuals should have protein from healthy sources at all meals.

"Protein shakes are an alternative when not enough protein is taken in through food," Vincent said. **CL**

Laurie Sabourin

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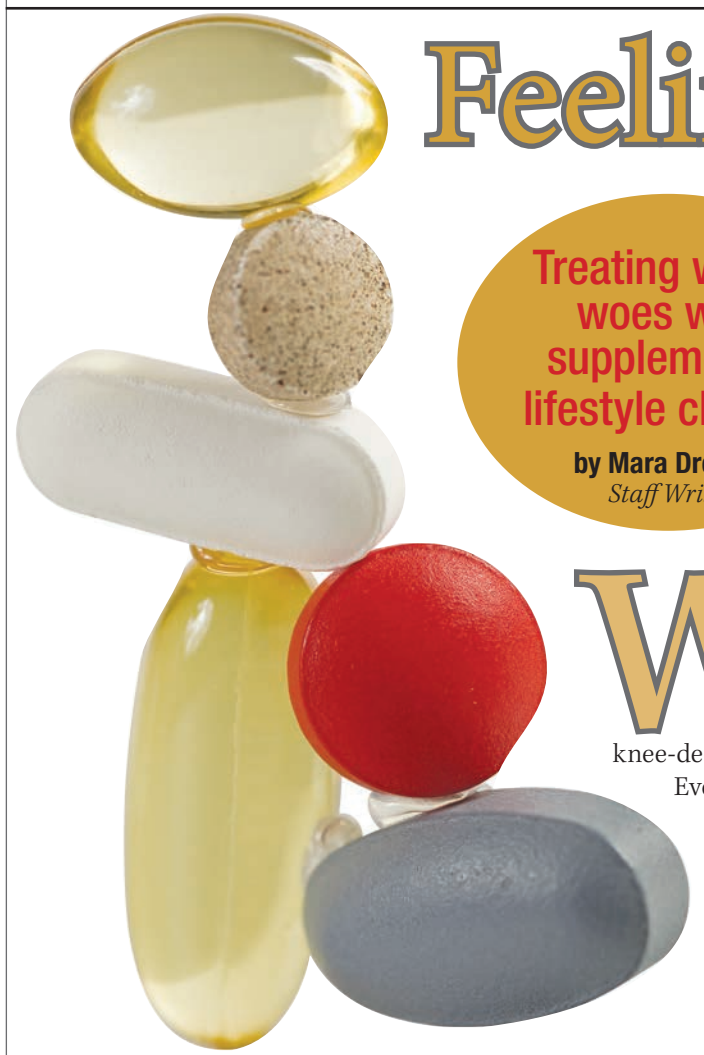
Laurie is the owner and director of Facilitated Healing Center and we celebrate our 17th year in Cromwell, Ms. Sabourin has been studying and practicing yoga since 1983. She has been a certified Kripalu Yoga instructor and a certified Shiva Rea Vinyasa Flow / Power Yoga instructor since 1995. Her years of experience have lead her to create her own unique style of yoga utilizing precise alignment techniques, some of which are her very own. Her teaching is very detailed to offer a safe yoga practice to her students. Laurie is also a licensed massage therapist since 1993 upon her graduation from The Connecticut Center for Massage Therapy. Her massage work is intuitive, detailed, and clinical by applying deep tissue techniques, as well as foot reflexology, acupressure, and aromatherapy. Ms. Sabourin is licensed by the State of Connecticut and through the town of Cromwell. She is an active member of the American Massage Therapy Association. CT License #000368

Healthy Living



Feeling better, naturally

Treating winter woes with supplements, lifestyle choices

by Mara Dresner
Staff Writer

Winter is in full swing and that means that we're knee-deep in seasonal woes. Even those of us who stay healthy the rest of the year often find ourselves down and out by the time February rolls around. And just because an ailment is common doesn't mean it can't make you miserable.

While there are times when reaching for a traditional cure is appropriate and necessary, some folks like to give more natural remedies a try. We spoke to some health-care experts to see what they recommend to prevent and treat some common maladies. Please remember that everyone is different and that no advice is one size fits all. Check with your own health care provider to make sure a supplement is safe for you, especially if you have existing medical conditions or are taking other supplements or medications.

Cough and cold

"Cold viruses run rampant this time of year. To avoid getting one, boost your immune system now with a healthy diet. High sugar and processed foods tend to weaken the immune system.

Gear your diet toward lean proteins, fruits and vegetables to reduce processed foods and boost antioxidants in the body," Renée J. Bordeaux, a registered dietitian, Certified dietitian-nutritionist and certified personal trainer, owner and president of Bordeaux Nutrition in Newington, recommended.

If you do feel a cold coming on, Bordeaux suggests adding a few supplements.

"Try extra vitamin C, a natural antioxidant found abundantly in

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citrus fruits and bell peppers. It takes a lot of oranges to boost your C levels. Try supplementing with up to 2,000 mg daily," she said. "Also try Quercetin, which helps decrease the histamine reaction that is responsible for symptoms like a stuffy and runny nose. It is naturally found in foods like apples and cruciferous veggies, but can also be supplemented with up to 750 mg daily."

Sometimes, it's just a cough that's giving you trouble.

"I find anything [like] citrus fruits really helps break up a cough. So I eat lots of oranges and grapefruits or add lemon juice to some hot water or herbal tea first thing in the morning to soothe a cough," Christina Baribault-Ortiz, a healthy lifestyle coach from Glastonbury, said.

She also recommends generally supporting your immune system.

"Organic raw chlorella powder derived from green plants have enough nutrients to kick any cough when consumed regularly," she noted. "It's very strong, so I recommend adding a small amount – 1 teaspoon – to a smoothie or stir into some orange juice to start. Work this into your regimen regularly and when you do get that inevitable cough/cold, it won't last as long."

Tummy troubles

It may not be glamorous to discuss, but sooner or later, everyone is struck by a bout of diarrhea. Sharon Hunter, ND, of The Connecticut Center for Health in West Hartford, said causes include viral, bacterial (usually food-borne) and antibiotic-induced.

"It's always wise to call one's health care provider. They will know what is going around, how long it generally lasts and common things to watch out for," she said. "Patients should see the doctor if they experience diarrhea that lasts longer than three days, fever of 102 or higher, signs of dehydration/severe loss of fluids [from] vomiting and/or diarrhea, severe abdominal pain, [or] any of these symptoms: blood in the stool, black tarry looking stools."

She recommends trying what she said is a "wonderful home treatment for diarrhea":

Applesauce
Add 1/8 tsp cinnamon (650 mg)
Add 1/2 tsp slippery elm powder (1.25 g/1250 mg)
Optional: add carob powder 1/4-1/2 tsp
The addition of a probiotic may be beneficial.
Repeat four to six times daily.

"The slippery elm and probiotic will be beneficial to continue after resolution of the diarrhea in order to continue to soothe the intestines," she noted. "All three ingredients help to stop diarrhea. The cinnamon also helps tone and soothes the intestines. You can repeat the carob and slippery elm multiple times per day."

Hunter said that cinnamon should be limited to 3/4 teaspoon per day for 150-pound adult. Children should limit it to much less, based on weight.

For example, a 50-pound child should not exceed 1/8 teaspoon per day in divided doses, split over four servings.

A smaller child should omit the cinnamon entirely and use only the carob and slippery elm.

"For slippery elm, the powder is best, especially for a child who can't swallow capsules. However, one can purchase caps and open them into the apple sauce," she said. "This treatment works time after time, tastes good and is usually easy to get into kids who are not vomiting. Avoid any foods that aggravate diarrhea and stick to a bland diet."

BRAT is the classic diet for diarrhea, which stands for bananas, rice, applesauce and toast (omitting the toast if gluten free).

Winter blues

Shorter days can often bring on an attack of the winter blues.

Christine Louden, ND, of The Connecticut Center for Health in West Hartford, noted that her

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"Fatigue can be a symptom of illness, and individuals should consult their physician to rule out any underlying medical condition. Seasonal affective disorder can be mild or severe, and if symptoms of depression are severe or interfere with daily life the individual should consult a physician," she noted.

She makes these recommendations for healthy adults on no medications.

"Many people who feel low energy in the winter are responding to the reduced exposure to light. My patients find significant benefit using a 'happy light.' Light therapy can lift mood and energy. In addition, it is one of the best methods for restoring normal sleep patterns. Special lights providing white light – not blue light, which can cause macular degeneration – can be purchased and should provide 10,000 lux at 12 inches or more," she explained.

The dose is 30 minutes of light in the morning.

"Good quality and quantity of sleep is crucial for good energy and mood. We cannot expect to feel energized and happy if we skimp on sleep. I tell my patients to aim for eight hours a night. If a patient is having trouble falling asleep, the light therapy can restore normal patterns. The second option is melatonin. People with SAD have an abnormal melatonin pattern. I often use 1 to 3 mg given at bedtime to restore the sleep pattern," she said.

Melatonin can cause excessive dreaming or nightmares in some individuals.

Magnesium can also help patients with insomnia and fatigue.

"In my patient population, magnesium deficiency is common. The best food sources are leafy greens such as spinach and kale. Almonds are a good source as well. To supplement with magnesium I recommend 200 to 400 mg of magnesium, glycinate if the patient is prone to anxiety, or citrate if the patient tends toward constipation.

"The most common side effect of magnesium is loose stool and this is more likely with the citrate form. Individuals should not supplement with more than 400 mg without consulting a physician. People with kidney problems must be cautious with magnesium supplements as they may experience toxicity," she explained.

Louden said that even something as basic as breathing can make a difference in how a patient feels.

"Pranayama or breath exercise is a simple, effective way to increase energy and alertness and lift mood. It can be done throughout the day. I encourage my patients to use this at work if they suffer an afternoon slump. Many of my patients sneak away to a bathroom stall and practice this. Alternate nostril breathing is one of my favorites. To increase energy, start with the inhale on the right; to calm down at bedtime, start with the inhale on the left," she noted. "Hold your right thumb over your right nostril and inhale deeply through your left nostril. At the peak of your inhalation, close off your left nostril with your fourth finger, then exhale smoothly through your right nostril. After a full exhalation, inhale through the right nostril, closing it off with your right thumb at the peak of your inhalation. Continue performing alternate nostril breathing for one to five minutes, following the same pattern."

She also recommends aromatherapy to help with mood.

"Studies show aromatherapy can have a profound influence on mood, and I recommend aromatherapy for anxiety and depression. For increasing energy, mental alertness and improving mood, lemon or lemongrass are effective," Louden said.

"A diffuser is the best way to use essential oils, but for energy on the go, my patients will place two to three drops on a cotton handkerchief and inhale the scent as they drive to work." **CL**

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Student of the Month

Jennifer Salce enjoys making music

by Allie Rivera
Staff Writer

On any given morning, it is likely that Jennifer Salce can be found with a clarinet in hand. A senior at Cromwell High School, she has been playing the woodwind instrument since the fifth grade.

"I'd always wanted to play an instrument," the 18-year-old said. "Throughout the years, I've been picking up different instruments. I recently started the alto sax, I've played a little bit of flute and the tiniest bit of piano."

Jennifer has remained dedicated to her music since she began and now is a member of both the school's concert band and all three of its jazz bands.

"We're starting to really amp up our music program," she said.

The three jazz groups meet each week outside of school hours, one during the evenings and the other two before school begins.

"You get used to it," Jennifer said of the early hours.

For the second year, she and other members of two of the jazz bands will be competing in the High School Jazz Festival on Feb. 11 at the Berklee College of Music in Boston.

"We went last year. It was our first year going and we got second place in our division," she said.

The festival is not the only place where Jennifer will be competing. Earlier in the school year, she auditioned for and was accepted into the Northern Regionals Honor Band for the second year in a row. In late January, she will play Brahms' Sonata as her audition piece for the State Honor Band.

The joy of these competitions comes from getting to travel with other members of the band.

"I think the best part is all the experiences we get to have," she said. "We get to travel a lot and see different places and we get to experience everything through our music."

Jennifer added that, while she enjoys her solo auditions, it is the thrill of performing in a full band that she truly loves.

"We had our concert in December and we played a version of 'Carol of the Bells'," she said. "It was a harder piece, but when we put it all together, it was amazing to hear."

In addition to her involvement in the band and jazz bands, Jennifer is also in the midst of preparing to stage manage the upcoming CHS production of "Rock of Ages," a musical based on glam rock songs of the 1980s.

This production will be the first time that she has ever stage managed a show, but the director asked her to serve in the role to help her prepare for her future.

"I'm pursuing music education after high school so my band teacher, who is also directing, thought it would be a good idea to do this," she said. "I know it will help me be more prepared for my career."

Jennifer must work with the director, cast and stage crew to ensure that the show is properly executed.

"I'm making sure everything's organized and staying on top of things to make sure it all runs smoothly," she said.

She is still waiting to hear back from all of the schools to which she applied. Her preference is to attend the University of Connecticut to study music education. In addition to her commitment to the arts, Jennifer keeps a rigorous academic schedule that includes an Advanced Placement literature course.

"Right now we are analyzing a lot of poetry," she said. "A few months ago, we spent a lot of time on 'The Scarlet Letter.'"

Outside of school, she maintains a job at the local Dairy Queen, where she has worked since May. She also enjoys spending time with her family, including younger brother Jake, older sisters Kayla and Sarah, and step-sister Rebecca who lives in Las Vegas, as well as her dog Sadie and four parakeets.

While calling Jennifer's numerous musical accomplishments impressive, Assistant Principal David DeCarli said it is her kindness toward others and positive attitude that sets her apart from her peers.

"She's one of those kids who will always brighten your day," DeCarli said. "She's really someone who provides a lot and does a lot for the school."

Having access to Cromwell's music program has been a positive part of every day and Jennifer feels it is important that all students be given the same opportunity to pursue artistic endeavors.

"The arts are really important to me, and not just music, but art and literature," she said. "I think it's very important to be able to express yourself." **CL**

"I think it's very important to be able to express yourself."
– Jennifer Salce

Jennifer Salce, 18, hopes to become a music teacher. To help prepare for that, she will be stage managing the Cromwell High School production of "Rock of Ages."

Community calendar

Su	Mo	Tu	We	Th	Fr	Sa
			1	2	3	4
5	6	7	8	9	10	11
12	13	14	15	16	17	18
19	20	21	22	23	24	25
26	27	28				

January

23 **Adult Knit Group,** 6:30 p.m., Cromwell Belden Public Library, 39 West St., 860-632-3460 or cromwellct.com

30 **Preschool Story & Film,** 10:30 a.m., for ages 3-5, Cromwell Belden Public Library, 39 West St., 860-632-3460 or cromwellct.com

Tissue Paper Snowflake Art, 4:30 p.m., for ages 5 and older, Cromwell Belden Public Library, 39 West St., 860-632-3460 or cromwellct.com

February

19 **Knights of Columbus Bowling Fundraiser,** noon to 3 p.m., Bowl-O-Rama, 2143 Berlin Turnpike, Newington, $20 per bowler ($10 for children under 12), proceeds benefit the Cromwell Food Bank, cromwellkofc.com/charitybowl

Is your club, community organization, school or house of worship holding an event open to the general public? If so, please send us the details for inclusion in our calendar. Email your events to Mark Jahne at mjahne@turleyct.com or mail them to Turley CT Community Publications, 540 Hopmeadow St., Simsbury, CT 06070.

News roundup

Fire departments respond to crashes

The Cromwell, Rocky Hill and Westfield fire departments responded to a significant traffic incident and additional but separate simultaneous motor vehicle accidents on both sides of I-91 during the snowy weather of Jan. 7.

The main accident occurred just over the Mattabassett River Bridge in Middletown near the Cromwell town line and involved four tractor-trailers and 26 cars. One tanker truck, one flatbed truck, one car carrier truck and one box freight truck were involved.

The saddle tank on one of the tractor-trailers was breached and dumped approximately 125 gallons of diesel fuel, according to Fire Chief Michael Terenzio.

Additional motor vehicle accidents on the stretch of highway that passes through Cromwell, Rocky Hill and Middletown were handled by units from Rocky Hill that responded with 32 personnel manning four pieces of equipment and two command vehicles.

The Cromwell Fire Department responded with approximately 40 personnel manning four pieces of equipment, two ambulances and one command vehicle. Westfield responded with more than 35 personnel manning four pieces of equipment and command vehicles.

The more seriously damaged vehicles required four extrications of the people inside. The cab section of one of the tractor-trailers was hanging over the embankment of the Mattabassett River Bridge and required stabilization. Other accidents north of the major incident in Rocky Hill involved two vehicles off the roadway and into the wooded areas adjacent to the highway.

Fire department gets grant

The Cromwell Fire Department is the recipient of a $2,500 Walmart Community Grant. Fire Chief Michael Terenzio said these funds will be used to construct a self-contained breathing apparatus (SCBA) mask confidence maze.

This prop is usually constructed out of wood partitions and simulates hallways and narrow spaces through which firefighters learn to become accustomed to wearing the SCBA in zero visibility. Certified trainers are always present inside the maze.

It is designed to encourage and build a firefighter's confidence to ultimately prepare him or her for an actual event. There is no time limit or competition and users are allowed to go through the maze without blacked-out masks to reduce anxiety.

Terenzio said any remaining grant money will be put toward the assembly of a rehab module or kit for use at protracted incidents during extreme weather conditions. It consists of an enclosed tent and provides a sanctuary where EMS personnel can conduct medical evaluations in accordance with OSHA and NFPA recommendations for firefighter safety.

Support the Music Boosters

The Cromwell High School Music Boosters will host their annual Jazz Cabaret & Silent Auction on June 3 to support the CHS music program. The club is accepting contributions for the silent auction and welcomes all donations including, but not limited to: tickets to major sporting events, concerts and theater shows; household, outdoor, or electronic items; gift baskets; restaurant gift certificates, gift cards and more.

All items are welcome and can be brought to the high school, located at 34 Evergreen Road, to the attention of Band Director Raymond Sinclair, or given to club President Wendy Wilkins. Tickets will be available soon.

For more information on silent auction donations or tickets contact Wilkins at 860-214-7924 or wsljlw@gmail.com.

Student rescued from pond

Members of the Cromwell police and fire departments rescued a student standing in the middle of a pond Jan. 11 at Ädelbrook school on Hicksville Road. Officers John Carlson, Peter Pietraroia and Zachery Augenstein responded and attempted to talk to the student and have him walk back to them when the ice gave way.

The student fell into the water and was chest deep when they threw him a rope in an attempt to pull him to shore, but he was unable to hold it. Firefighter Jeremy Hiriak donned a cold water suit and crawled out on the ice.

Once Hiriak was able to get the student lying on the ice, he held onto the rope and both were pulled to shore by the officers. The student, who was only in the water for three minutes, was not injured during the incident but was transported to Middlesex Hospital to be evaluated for precautionary reasons.

Cromwell government agencies, schools, businesses, clubs, churches and all other civic organizations are invited to send us their upcoming events for inclusion in events spotlight and/or the community calendar. We also welcome people notes and news briefs for news roundup. You can send them to us at mjahne@turleyct.com or Cromwell LIFE, 540 Hopmeadow St., Simsbury, CT 06070.

Fulfilling work

Cromwell's Bob Hennessy is a musician and a photographer

by Mara Dresner
Staff Writer

Courtesy photos

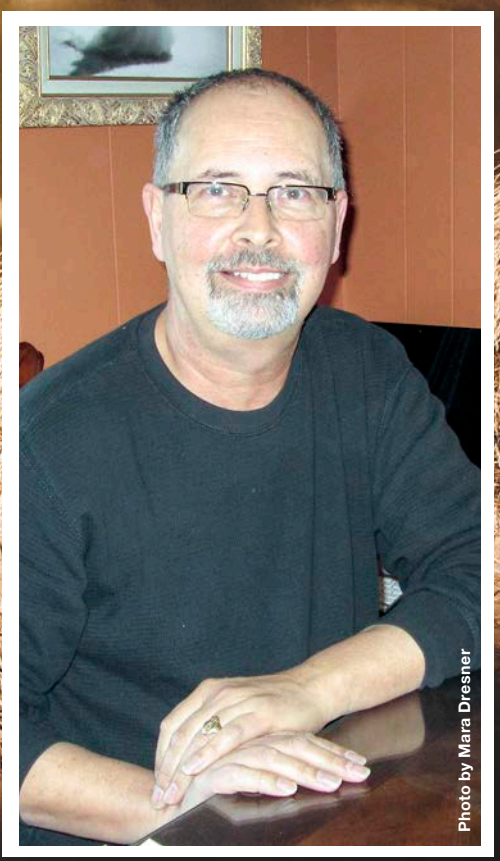


Photo by Mara Dresner

Bob Hennessy grew up in the restaurant business on Cape Cod.

"My mother used to wake us up to go to school with 'South Pacific' blaring," he recalled. "My family always had music in the restaurant."

He worked in the family business until he was 18.

"Then I'd had enough. It's something you have to love. It's totally consuming and it just wasn't my calling," he said.

He headed to the West Coast to explore his creative side.

"I went to San Francisco a couple of times. I thought myself a poet, so I decided to start doing readings," he said.

"A couple of my brothers were musicians, so I asked them to back me up and we turned it into a band. That's how I got started in the music business. That was in the mid-'70s and I've kind of always carried it on since then."

Hennessy said the band lasted for several years.

"We were very eclectic, from Lambert, Hendrix and Ross, to Earth, Wind and Fire. It essentially turned into a dance band in the end," he said.

Hennessy, who moved to Cromwell in 1980, plays harmonica and sings. He took up the instrument by happenstance after a musician gave him one when he was living in San Francisco.

"I decided to incorporate it in my poetry," he said.

Through the years he's played with a variety of bands, as well as recording a couple of smooth jazz albums.

"There are tons of people I collaborate with. It's nice; there are not a lot of people that play the instrument," he said.

He explained there are several types of harmonica styles including blues/rock or diatonic, and jazz/pop or chromatic.

"They blend a little bit, but they are two separate groups and I combine both. I play both," he said.

"I know Bob Hennessy first as a somewhat legendary musician from a musical family of Cape Cod.

"It's something that makes me feel good, that makes me feel whole, that I'm doing something I'm supposed to be doing."

– Bob Hennessy

Through the community, we finally hooked up as musicians, which has proven to be one of my most rewarding and creative relationships ever," Michael Oakland of Mashpee, Mass., said.

"Bob has been featured on numerous CDs of mine and many, many performances throughout the past. I can always count on his impeccable, tasty treatments of so many different styles of music that we play. And as a person, he has become a good and trusted friend whose company is always appreciated as sincere and fun."

Music isn't Hennessy's only career. He is also a photographer, although it didn't become a business venture until 1986, after he was married and living in Connecticut.

"It was always in the background. I got into the wedding business to afford the tools. It's far simpler today than it was then. You couldn't 'chimp the camera.' That's kind of derogatory. You could be a monkey and handle the camera. [Back then] you had had to pre-visualize and know what the outcome would be," he said.

"Weddings were a way to afford the tools and the eventual process was to move into portraiture and fine arts stuff, which we're still exploring, and although we have a nice collection of fine art, we can't say we support ourselves with fine art."

His interest in photography goes

back to when he was working at the restaurant and met photographer Terry Kibbe.

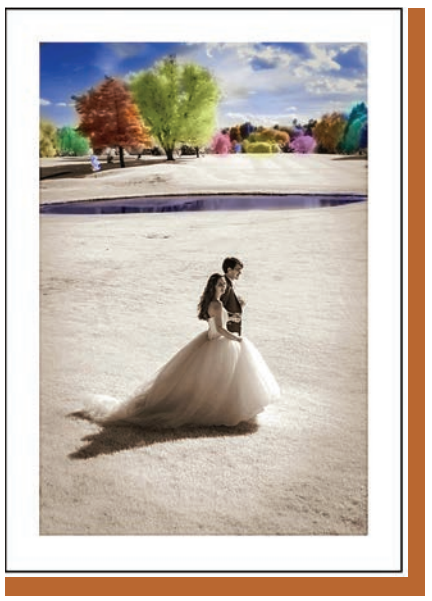
"He was a student of Minor White, who was kind of a cohort of Ansel Adams. He kind of expanded my interest in the visual. He kind of gave me a start and an interest in it," Hennessy said.

His work has run the gamut from traditional weddings to executive portraits to nature photography. Nowadays, he's concentrating more on fine art. He said his work is often evocative.

"I don't know if melancholy is the right word; maybe meditative is the appropriate word. I think that it evokes some kind of personal spirituality. Sometimes I take a picture and look at a photo for maybe a year and not really understand why I took it," Hennessy said.

"The hope is you can take something and you can share it and people will appreciate it. That's why I shoot," he added.

"It gives me some kind of comfort. It's generally about simple things, more quiet, subdued. I grew up on Cape Cod, with the gray sky



and the sand. For me it's very calming, very melancholy without being depressed."

He's always open to new opportunities.

"I don't know if it's true for everybody who does multiple things, but sometimes you get to a certain point [and your work] stalls or stops or you're bored, so you go to your other thing and see if you can find expression with that. With the wedding thing, I know how I see a wedding," he said.

"Now I know how the clients I choose to work with see a wedding, but now I'm getting bored. So you look for ways to expand what you're doing. On this Internet forum group I joined, guys were doing bizarre kinds of things for weddings; at that point it was called 'trash the dress.' I never took it to that point; I never offered it to clients.

"But it gave me the opportunity to play around. It got me thinking more about the fine art direction than the wedding direction. It solidified the kind of client I want to work with," he said.

When he does wedding work, it's typically an older couple having a smaller, second wedding. When he shoots for himself, he doesn't usually plan what he's going to photograph on a certain day.

"It's a need. I just feel like, I haven't picked up a camera for a while, let's go grab it and see what happens. Generally, it's very spontaneous. If I'm in a junkyard or the mall, it doesn't matter where I am, the purpose is to discover something," Hennessy said.

"Sometimes it works, sometimes it doesn't. It's that kind of impulse. Once you grab some things, now it's editing. Why did I take that picture? What can I do with it? That's the secondary process. Do I show it to anybody? Does it need to be seen?"

He continues with his music. Inspired by a harmonica player from Indiana, he's put together a solo program that he brings to nursing homes.

He also has a program for libraries and schools called "The World of Harmonica" that includes the history of the instrument as well as demonstrations. He plays both locally and on the Cape.

While Hennessy's many artistic activities might not seem to have much in common, there is one thing that links them.

"They all [bring out] the same kind of emotion in me. It's always the same feeling. It's just feels good," he said.

"It's something that makes me feel good, that makes me feel whole, that I'm doing something I'm supposed to be doing." **CL**

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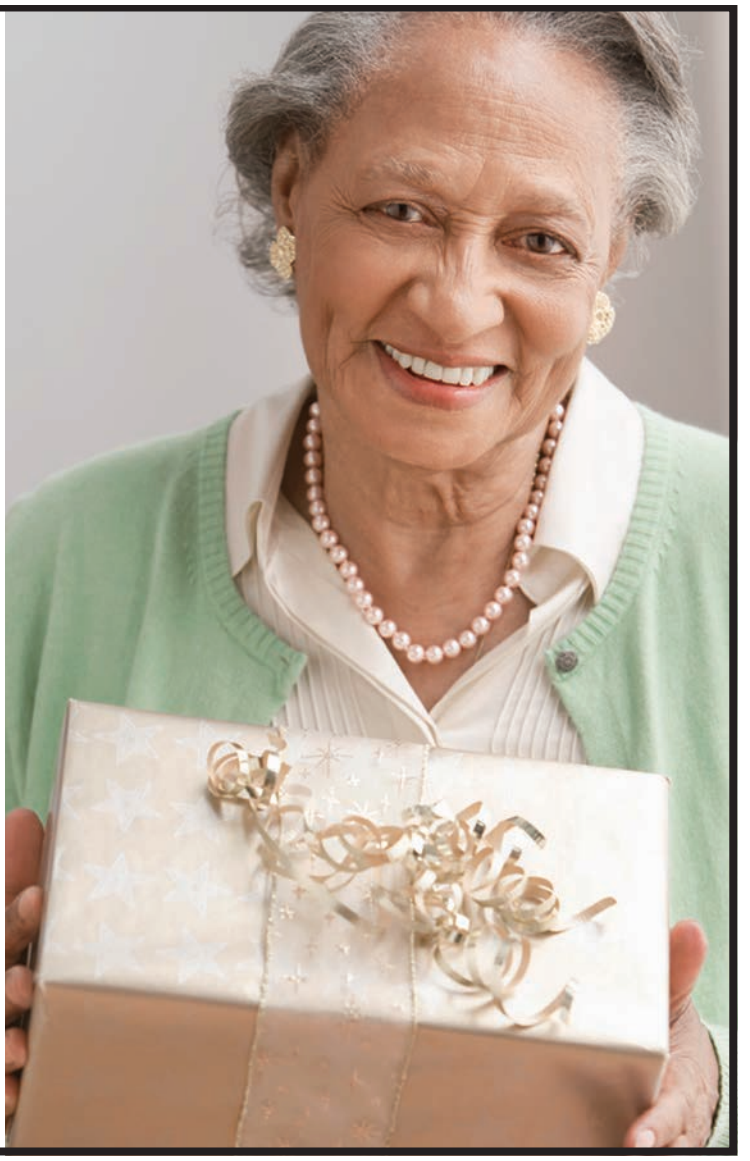

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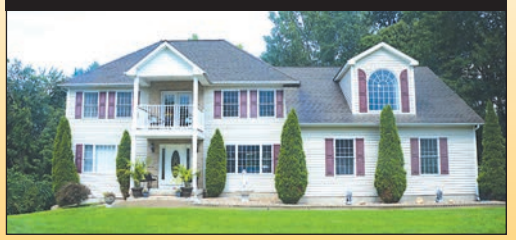

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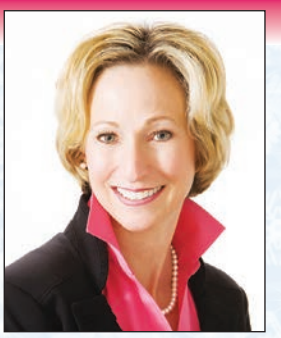

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Editorial

Bracing for a tough budget year

Just when we thought there was a light at the end of the tunnel, that light turns out to be an oncoming train. That's a metaphor for the fiscal situation every city and town in Connecticut is facing this coming fiscal year that starts July 1.

State government is buried under a deficit well in excess of $1 billion and growing. How our elected leaders let it get to that point over the years is a question that must some day be answered, but in the meantime, we have to deal with more pressing matters.

In addition, the city of Hartford is teetering on the edge of municipal bankruptcy. That would send serious ripples not just through the city, but into the suburbs and beyond.

Mayor Luke Bronin has been visiting any town that will have him to explain how Hartford got into a fiscal mess that is at least $50 million this year and projected to be more over the next few years as delayed and refinanced municipal debt comes due.

He has publicly suggested a variety of options that could save the city but they are not likely to happen. His choices are few and none of them are particularly appealing.

State aid is the usual way out of such a crisis but since the state is swimming in all that aforementioned red ink this is a most unlikely result. Legislators will be hard pressed to get their own fiscal house in order.

Not only are they not likely to bail out Hartford, but towns throughout the state – including this one – are almost certain to see reduced amounts of municipal aid and Education Cost Sharing funds. That will create huge pressure on local budgets.

Town councils and boards of education are going to have to enact difficult and far-reaching cuts to make the books balance. Popular programs will almost certainly have to be cut. Employees will almost certainly have to be laid off.

Nobody wants to do this, but they may have no choice but to reduce library and senior center hours, cut back on public works, trim the workforce and put on hold any expenditures that are not absolutely necessary.

School districts may have no choice but to increase class sizes, reduce arts, sports and music programs, lay off teachers and put the brakes on implementing new technologies.

The other option, of course, is a moderate to significant tax hike. No local politician wants to do that, especially in a year when they will be on the ballot in November.

It's vital that people take all of this into account and attend public hearings and other meetings where input can be given to those charged with making these difficult decisions. **CL**

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BY MARK DIXON
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Fog in the winter

Freezing Fog, also known as Ice Fog, is something we have to contend with at times, here in Connecticut. But what exactly is it?

Well first, and most basically, let's examine 'fog'... it can form in a variety of ways. Often it develops on a night with a clear sky and a calm wind – this is radiation fog – when the Earth cools to a temperature that water vapor condenses as the temperature gets close to, or meets the dew point (the air becomes saturated). Also, there is 'advection' fog... when warm, moist air moves over a colder surface, such as snow (this can happen even when there is wind), or even the colder water of Long Island Sound. Water droplets suspended in the air, reduce visibility – when dense, it could drop to less than a quarter of a mile, greatly impacting travel.

So next, to qualify as 'freezing' fog – it's all about the surface temperature. When it is below freezing (32 degrees Fahrenheit), those water droplets that make up fog freeze on contact. As this happens, untreated surfaces can become very slick, especially those surfaces that are elevated, like bridges and overpasses.

This month's article was in response to a reader/viewer's inquiry. If you have a suggestion for a topic to be addressed, or a question - send me an email: mdixon@wfsb.com. **CL**

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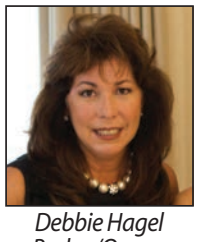

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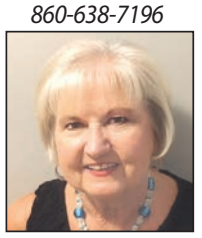

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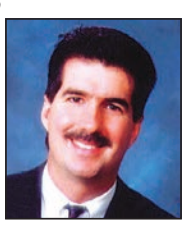

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